

In the trenches with the old 'Victor'

I live in an old farmhouse which dates back to the 1830s, and was built by my great-great-grandfather James Brown.

Living in an old house, there are certain issues that are a given when one resides inside a bit of history. The most obvious is mice.

I doubt there's an old house around that doesn't have a few mice scurrying about within their own little world inside the walls.

And for the most part, I really don't have any great problems with them scampering around in there—so long as they stay on their side of the wall. In other words, inside it.

Translation: no trespassing.

About a week ago, I opened a drawer in the kitchen, and was greeted with evidence that a certain mouse (or ten) had violated that co-existence pact. He had not only trespassed, but also brazenly left a sprinkling of his calling cards—all inside my stir fry pan.

Further investigation revealed the same perpetrator ('the perp' as I'll now call him) had not only been in that drawer, but also in others, one with a bag of marshmallows in it, now sporting a gaping hole in the side of it. He also violated a bag of pasta, with lots more of his little calling cards scattered around, right inside the bag.

With a direct violation of the co-existence pact, war was immediately declared. After washing the cutlery in boiling water, I pulled out other drawers and dealt with them, eliminating the spoils of war that the mouse had, well, spoiled. With my casualties dealt with, it was time to plan my counter attack.

Peeved, I prophesized this particularly pint-sized perp had peed and pooped in his last package of my pasta.

Out came the Brown family's heavy artillery.

It's a venerable old Victor mouse trap that at least four generations of Browns have used to wage war against the unseen residents inside the walls, who have violated the co-

A
TED
BIT



Ted Brown

existence pact. And it still snaps like a charm.

I have often wondered how big the pile of mice casualties would be from this trap, if it were possible to collectively assemble them.

Cartoon characters are often portrayed using cheese to bait a trap, but the Brown family traditional line of wartime attack has been to use a bit of bacon as bait on the old Victor.

That baiting practice dates back to the great mouse uprising on the original Brown homestead in Pelham, Ontario, during the war of 1812. Ballads have been sung around the Brown home fires for generations, about that historic event, as the little children would sit wide-eyed listening to stories of the great bloody battle.

(Apparently, they were American mice...)

Personally, I tend to get effective kills using Maple Leaf bacon, but I've heard from Brown cousins in the Welland area that Schneider's smoked, thick sliced works equally well.

Next morning, as I boiled the kettle for tea, I opened the door under the sink to check 'no mouse's land' in the trenches of the battlefield.

The trap wasn't in its original tactical position. I suspected firing recoil had moved it.

Victor had scored a clean, direct hit. One trespasser down, a couple hundred left.

Now, after my show of force, the long-term blockade and trade sanctions will be imposed.

In other words, I'll find that mouse hole....

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